

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 AID-05 IO-10 DPW-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SR-02 ORM-01 FDRE-00 OPR-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2843

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NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, SREF, CB, TH

SUBJ: CAMBODIA SITUATION REPORT - APRIL 16

CAMBODIA-B NO. 42

1. MILITARY SITUATION. DEFENSE ATTACHE PERSONNEL FORMERLY ASSIGNED TO PHNOM PENH SPOKE AT 1200 LOCAL BY PHONE WITH A SENIOR KHMER NAVY (MNK) OFFICER AND A KAF OFFICE AT DASC. THE MNK OFFICER SAID THE GKR RULING COUNCIL HAS ASKED THE UN TO ARRANGE A SURRENDER TO THE KC TODAY, APRIL 16, AND THAT NAVY COMMANDER RADM VONG SARENDY HAD REPORTEDLY ASKED FOR A U.S. HELICOPTER TO EVACUATE HIGH-RANKING FANK OFFICERS (NOTE: ALUSNA TOLD THE MNK OFFICER THIS WAS CLEARLY IMPOSSIBLE). THE KAF OFFICER SAID THE GKR HAD OFFERED TO SURRENDER TO THE KC IF LATTER WOULD AGREE NOT TO ENTER THE CITY; HE SAID THE GKR WAS AWAITING A RESPONSE.

2. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, THE KHMER LIAISON OFFICER AT USSAG, WHO HAPPENS TO BE THE BROTHER OF MRS. LONG BORET, TOLD MG HUNT HE HAD RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM DASC THAT
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LTG SAK SUTSAKHAN AND A GROUP OF HIS RANKING OFFICERS

WISHED TO BE INVITED TO CME TO NKP FOR A MEETING ON PLANNING FOR THE DEFENSE OF PHNOM PENH. IF SO INVITED THEY WOULD TAKE A KAF HELICOPTER TO KOMPONG CHHNANG AND TRANSFER TO ANOTHER AIRCRAFT THERE FOR THE ONWARD FLIGHT TO NKP. AMBSSADOR DEAN ADVISED MG HUNT THAT THE U.S. COULD NOT INVITE SAK SUTSAKHAN AND HIS PARTY TO COME TO NKP, AND THAT THERE WAS ESSENTIALLY NOTHING ABOUT WHICH TO CONSULT. IF IT IS A QUESTION OF A ONE-WAY EVACUATION TRIP TO THAILAND, THEN THE KHMER EMBASSY IN BANGKOK SHOULD REQUEST APPROPRIATE CLEARANCE FROM THE RTG FOR ENTRY INTO THAI AIRSPACE. THE U.S. SHOULD NOT BE PLACED IN THE MIDDLE ON SUCH A REQUEST. MG HUNT WILL TELL KHMER LIAISON OFFICER TO REPLY TO PHNOM PENH IN THESE TERMS IF HE HAS A CHANCE.

3. ELSEWHERE ON THE MILITARY SCENE REPORTS FOR THE PHNOM PENH AREA OVER THE PAST 24 HOURS HAVE BEEN FAR FROM CLEAR. THE PICTURE IS ONE OF SMALL PROBES AND REPULSES, WITH MANY POSITIONS OR AREAS CHANGING HANDS BACK AND FORTH; YET THE OVERALL TREND IS ONE OF IN-EXORABLE ADVANCE OF THE KC. TAKHMAU WAS LOST THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 15. THE ESSO POL STORAGE PLANT NORTH OF THE CITY WAS BLOWN UP BY KC SAPPERS. AT 1000 ON APRIL 16 THE AIRPORT WAS REPORTED STILL IN FRIENDLY HANDS, BUT SURROUNDED AND SUBJECT TO INFANTRY ATTACKS FROM ALL DIRECTIONS. THE AIRDROP ZONE SOUTH OF THE AIRPORT EMPLOYED BY THE U.S. WAS IN FRIENDLY HANDS THIS MORNING. HAND TO HAND FIGHTING WAS REPORTED IN PARTS OF TUOL KAU, A NORTHWESTERN SUBURB OF THE CAPITAL.

4. AT NOON THE 7TH DIVISION WAS REPORTED 1 TO 2 KM SOUTH OF PREK PHNEOU. FRIENDLY POSITIONS WERE AS FAR WEST AS 2KM EAST OF ANG SNUOL. MONIVONG BRIDGE, AT THE SOUTH EDGE OF THE CITY, WAS REPORTED FIRST AS TAKEN BY THE ENEMY, AND THEN AS RETAKEN, AT LEAST FOR A TIME, BY FANK. A 24-HOUR CURFEW WAS REIMPOSED EARLY THIS MORNING.

5. OUTSIDE OF PHNOM PENH, KOMPONG SOM WAS REPORTED TO
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BE RECEIVING ATTACKS BY FIRE AND SOME GROUND ATTACKS (FIRST IN A LONG TIME). SVEY RIENG, UNDER EVEN HEAVIER PRESSURE THAN YESTERDAY, WAS STILL HOLDING WITH A REDUCED PERIMETER. KOMPONG SPEU HAD FIVE GROUND ATTACKS AND TWO ABFS, AND THE SITUATION WAS DESCRIBED AS CRITICAL. IN BATTAMBANG THERE ARE REPORTS THAT MG SEK SAM IET, THE MILITARY REGION COMMANDER, HAS MADE A MAJOR DEAL WITH THE KC, WHO WOULD NOT ATTACK THE CITY

IN RETURN FOR SALT, POL AND OTHER COMMODITIES.

6. SIHANOUK WAS REPORTED IN SAM NEUA A DAY OR SO AGO AND IS SUPPOSED TO BE SEEING THE LAO KING TODAY, THE 16TH.

7. CONDITIONS AMONG KHMERS IN TEMPORARY FACILITY AT UTAPAO. OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS STATE AND AID EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN SPENDING TIME AT THE FACILITY, WICH NOW CONTAINS SOME 870 KHMER RESIDENTS. THEY REPORT THAT WHILE THE ACCOMMODATIONS IN TENTS ARE NOT LUXURIOUS, BY AND LARGE THE KHMERS ARE SATISFIED BOTH WITH LIVING CONDITIONS AND THE FOOD. THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE FACILITY, HIMSELF A HIGHLY SYMPATHETIC AND HELPFUL PERSON, IS DESCRIBED AS VERY COMPLIMENTARY OVER THE WAY IN WHICH THE CAMBODIANS HAVE ORGANIZED THEMSELVES FOR THEIR OWN SELF-GOVERNMENT. PRINCIPAL AREAS OF APPREHENSION RELATE TO THE INDIVIDUAL DESTINIES OF THE KHMERS, HOW LONG THEY WILL REMAIN THERE, WHAT WILL BE THEIR ULTIMATE DESTINATION, HOW WILL THEY BE ABLE TO COPY FINANCIALLY, THE NEED FOR LANGUAGE AND JOB TRAINING, AND THE LIKE. MASTERS

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